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assistive technology *facts*

Assistive Technology & Learning Disabilities

For Sally, who has dyslexia, using books on tape allows her to keep up with her school work and enjoy books. She also uses a calculator in math class. These AT devices mean school success for Sally.

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What is assistive technology?

Assistive technology—called AT—is any device or service that helps a person be more independent at home, at work, at school or at play.

Children and adults with any type of disability can use AT to make the most of their abilities and to do things more quickly and easily.

How can AT help children with learning disabilities?

There are a variety of assistive technology devices that can help children with any type of learning disability. Everything from highlighter pens to computers are great tools for children with different learning styles and needs.

AT services can also help children select and make the most of their assistive technology devices. With AT services, many children are able to take full advantage of their preschool or classroom experiences.

Examples of AT devices for children with learning disabilities

- highlighter pens
- headphones, ear plugs or white noise machines
- books on tape, videos or CD-roms
- computer software
- laptop computers
- electronic notebooks
- graph paper
- beepers and buzzers
- calculators or talking calculators
- tape recorders
- specialized computer keyboards
- hand-held spellers
- voice organizers
- word processors with spell, grammar and proofreading checks
- word processors with voice output
- reminder devices



To order copies of this fact sheet, or to learn more about VPIC's materials and services, contact the Vermont Parent Information Center (VPIC), 600 Blair Park, Suite 301, Williston, VT 05495, (802) 876-5315 (v/tty) or toll free 1 (800) 639-7170. You can also contact us via e-mail at vpic@vtpic.com. And don't forget to visit our website at www.vtpic.com.

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Types of computer programs for children with learning disabilities

- mapping and outlining programs
- word prediction programs
- text to speech programs
- interactive reading programs with tracking and speed support for use with any printed text including textbooks, literature and student's own written assignments
- programs which turn a personal computer with a scanner and a voice synthesizer into a reading machine
- speech-to-text dictation programs
- pre-writing programs which assist writers in choosing, exploring and organizing information about a topic

Questions to ask when evaluating AT needs

- What are the child's abilities, skills and interests?
- What level of support will the child need to use a device effectively?
- To what extent will the child be able to make choices and use devices independently?
- What are the child's goals for reading, writing, math skill building, creativity, problem solving, independence, friendship and recreation?
- In what settings will the child use AT?
- Does the child have any special physical or intellectual needs?
- What is the child's learning style?
- What do other children the same age like or need to do?

Resources

Laureate Learning Systems, Inc.
adaptive AT software

110 East Spring Street • Winooski, VT 05404 • (802) 655-4755
www.laureatelearning.com

Stern Center for Language & Learning
AT evaluations

135 Allen Brook Lane • Williston, VT 05495 • (802) 878-2332
www.sterncenter.org

Center for Applied Special Technology
AT resources for those with learning disabilities
39 Cross Street • Peabody, MA 01960
(978) 531-8555
www.cast.org

Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic, Inc.
books in accessible media

20 Roszel Road • Princeton, NJ 08540
(800) 221-4792 • (609) 452-0606
www.rfbd.org

National Center for Learning Disabilities
information on learning disabilities and AT
381 Park Avenue South Suite 1401 • New York, NY 10016 • (888) 575-7373 • www.ncld.org

Learning Disabilities Resources
AT resources for those with learning disabilities
(860) 868-3214
www.ldresources.com

Titles in VPIC's Assistive Technology (AT) Series

Facts About AT • AT Evaluations • AT & the IEP • AT & the IFSP • AT & Section 504 • Funding AT • Funding AT Through Medicaid • Funding AT Through Private Insurance